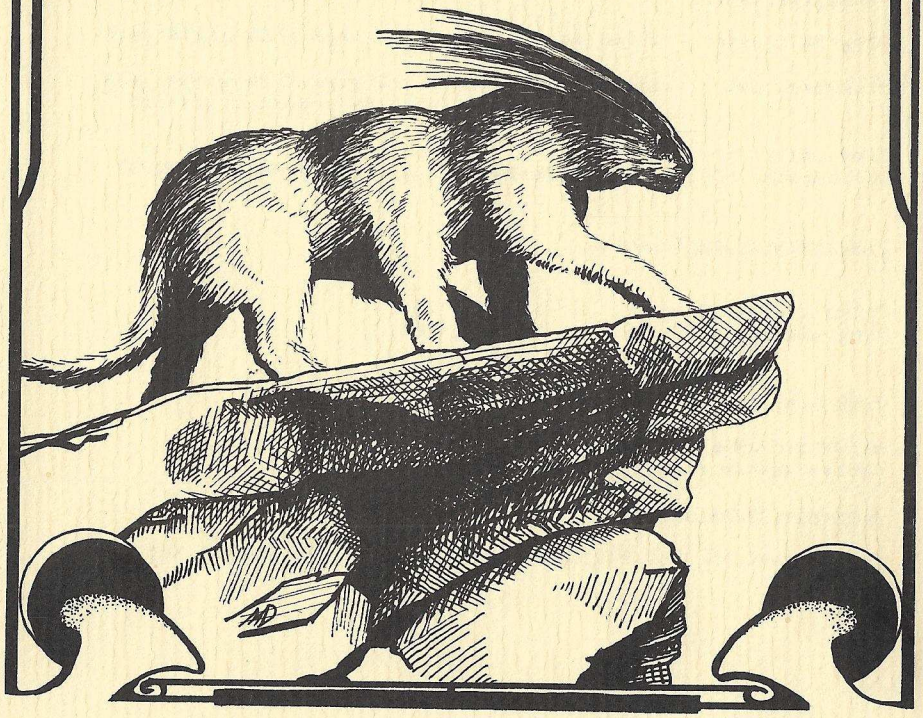
novacon 19

9 TO 11 NOVEMBER 1990

EXCELSIOR HOTEL BIRMINGHAM

GUEST OF HONOUR - JACK COHEN



NOVACON TWENTY *FRIDAY 9th NOVEMBER TO SUNDAY 11th NOVEMBER*

EXCELSIOR HOTEL BIRMINGHAM
(Room rates and overflow hotel to be announced.)

GUEST OF HONOUR DR. *JACK COHEN*

Chairman: Bernie Evans

Commitee: Al Johnstone, Steve and Alice Lawson, Nick Mills, Richard Standage.

Staff: *Creche*, Vicky Evans. *Bookroom*, Anne Page. *Artshow* Bill McCabe.

Membership Rates.

£15.00 per person Postal memberships by Monday 25th September.

Advertising Rates.

Progress Reports: £28.00 per page. £14.00 half page. £7.00 quarter page.

Programme book: £36.00 per page. £18.00 half page. £9.00 quarter page. (£1 per qtr. page discount for payment in advance).

Send camera ready copy to :
Alice Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ. (Telephone: 0742 728639)

Advertising & Copy Deadlines.

Third Progress Report: 31st Aug 1990
Programme Book: 31st Aug 1990

Book Room Rates.

£15.00 per table for the weekend.
Dealers must be members of the convention.

Convention Enquiries.

Bernie Evans, 121 Cape Hill, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4SH.

CHAIRMAN'S BIT

Well, here it is at long last, your very first PR for NOVACON 20. I start with an apology, for the more than extreme lateness of this PR. It is entirely my fault, I'm afraid I fouled up completely when I moved house, (well, SINCE I moved house, to be strictly correct). I'm sure you don't all want to read house-moving horror stories, so I won't go into boring detail, and for those who DO want to read house-moving horror stories, TOUGH!. Anyway, to further delay matters, this page was so far out of date I recalled it from the printers to do it again, which added to the overall lateness of things. OK, explanation over with, apologies proffered, me being who (and what) I am, I ain't gonna grovel, that's your lot along those lines!

So, what about the Convention? Things are progressing as they usually do, in that a couple of foul-ups have already happened and been sorted. Talk about the best laid plans..... Nice though it was at the Excelsior last year, we were mindful of the overflow hotel problem, and tried real hard to go back to the city centre, but it seems the city centre don't want us, in fact the city centre don't need us. This new Convention Centre's playing havoc with hotel accommodation in Birmingham. The only deals I could get were at full commercial rates with no concessions. Too much expense account business around you see. How many of you have expense accounts?, thought so, guess where we're going in November?!

Personally, I'm pleased to be back at the Excelsior. They genuinely liked us, and genuinely want us back, and that counts for a lot. Which brings me to foul-up number 2. They don't like us enough to cancel existing business, and they were booked up for the weekend we originally announced, Oct 26th to 28th, and the following weekend, November 2nd to 4th, so we'll be celebrating our 20th, and British Fandom's 60th, 2 weeks later than planned, from November 9th to 11th.

If anyone joined on the basis of the old dates, and can't make it, contact me for a refund, but if you change your mind again after you lose the cheap rate, if you joined at the cheap rate in the first place, of course.

As is usual with PR1, we aren't saying much about the programme just yet, this time that's not because it's "early days", but because I want to leave something to write about in PR2. besides, if you had a fully informative PR1 it would be flying completely in the face of tradition, wouldn't it?.

Our Guest-of-Honour is Jack Cohen, a man who has given a lot to SF behind the scenes, and who is, in our opinion, fully deserving of the title. And won't it be pleasant to listen to him at a nice civilised hour instead of getting up in the early hours to listen to him in Novacon's traditional scientific talk spot.

An important aspect of our programme this year will be the celebration of British Fandom's 60th birthday, (what's 2 weeks after 60 years?), since the first known meeting of SF fans in Britain took place in Ilford on October 27th 1930. Fan historian ROB HANSEN will be helping us to plan that aspect of the programme.

Finally, please please please fill in any forms we send you, they're for your benefit, to help us to give you what you want. Anyone filling in sections 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the general purpose form will be contacted at a later date by the staff-member responsible, to ascertain precise needs, and the Hotel form will be sent out with the next PR, very shortly.

JACK COHEN - FRIEND AND PRO

BY BERNIE EVANS

With his white hair forming a wild halo around his head, his wonderful lecture-room filling voice, and his expansive gestures, Jack Cohen would make a good Emmett Brown (Back to the Future). With his enthusiasm for life, his thirst for knowledge and his overwhelming ability to impart his knowledge and ideas to others in an interesting and exciting way, he must have been a great teacher. I wish I'd been a student of his. Yes, you've guessed, I'm a fan of his!!

My first visit to the Brumgroup was for a Jack Cohen talk, which was described in the following month's newsletter thus:- "Dr Jack Cohen showed us slides of a variety of copulating animals, and explained some of the weird and wonderful ways in which aliens might reproduce." This exemplifies Jack's approach, whether he's talking to a bunch of students or a meeting of SF fans, his talks are lively, visually and mentally stimulating, informative, and FUN.

But, there's more to Jack than that. If you've ever read an SF novel or story in which the aliens are <u>believable</u>, there's a very good chance Jack's influence and knowledge is in there somewhere.

The illustration opposite is singularly appropriate, since Jack Cohen has had a hand in shaping more worlds than you or I could ever dream of. To be more accurate, Jack's hand was shaping the aliens who inhabit those worlds. Worlds written of by the Brumgroups own honorary presidents, Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, and by many others too numerous to mention.

Brian Aldiss, quoted from the *HELLICONIA* novels :-

> "I must also thank.....and Professor Jack Cohen for indispensable suggestions "

Harry Harrison, quoted from *WEST OF EDEN*:-

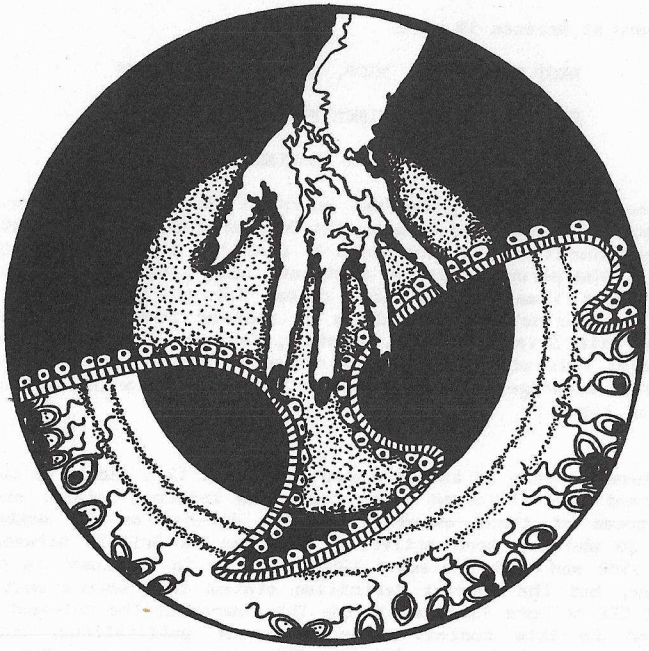
> "for.....and Jack Cohen, without whose aid this book would never have been written"

The biographical notes from the dust-wrapper of his book *THE PRIVILEGED APE* tell us that "for 25 years he was a reproductive biologist at Birmingham University, and he has made professional contributions within many differing branches of Biology, including:- origins of the major phila of animals, feather development, maternal effects in development and biology of spermatozoa." (now take a closer look at the illustration!). The notes also tell us he has written important books on embryology, reproduction and human fertility.

Sometimes his work was controversial, but always he has striven to improve the quality of life, to lessen the sadnesses that many couples have. Jack once spoke to me of LIKING his children. He was the first person I ever spoke to who understood the difference between loving your children because they ARE your children, and liking them as people. But of course he understood me, Jack has a depth of understanding which many of us would do well to try to emulate. It is this which has shone through whenever he has discussed this area of his professional life.

Perhaps I should have left this article to the professionals, but I wanted desperately to write it myself. Until I met Jack I'd never met a academic who was so full of life, so bubbly, so enthusiastic. This I wanted to communicate to the rest of you, the professional tributes will come later.

So, WHAT IS Jack Cohen, fan, perfectionist, researcher, writer, lecturer, entertainer. He is all these and more. Others will be writing about him in future PRs, this little offering is my own tribute to a warm caring man who has contributed much to SF, and even more to the world at large. It is also my reason for inviting Jack to be our Guest-of-Honour. My life has been made richer by being able to call him my friend, so will yours.



Excerpt from a letter from John Brunner to another Jack fan

"Once at a convention I was trying to mediate between Jack and a would-be author who wanted intelligent cats with an upright stance in her story. Jack didn't. (He wouldn't, would he?) So I improvised a treetop-dwelling predator which pounced by using internal pressure for its spring. All she needed was to bring the reflex under conscious control and she'd have a predator walking upright. She still wanted intelligent cats..... After she'd gone, Jack turned to me and asked "Do you know how a chameleon's tongue works?" I said no, and he said "Exactly as you've described!" That made my invention too good to waste. Now you know where the aliens came from in *THE CRUCIBLE OF TIME*. Thank you, Jack!"

And a quote from one from Larry Niven

"Jack Cohen is an unfailing source of material for science fiction stories"

THE NOVA AWARDS

In 1973 the late Gillon Field created the ***NOVA AWARD*** for fanzines produced by Science Fiction Fandom, and until 1981 this was presented annually at Novacon to the editor of the fanzine voted 'best of the year'. From 1982 onwards, additional Nova Awards were presented to the Fanwriter and Fanartist voted 'best of the year'. These three awards have been presented annually at Novacons ever since.

The winners at Novacon 19 were:

BEST FANZINE. VSOP, edited by JAN ORYS

BEST FANWRITER. SIMON POLLEY

BEST FANARTIST. DAVE MOORING

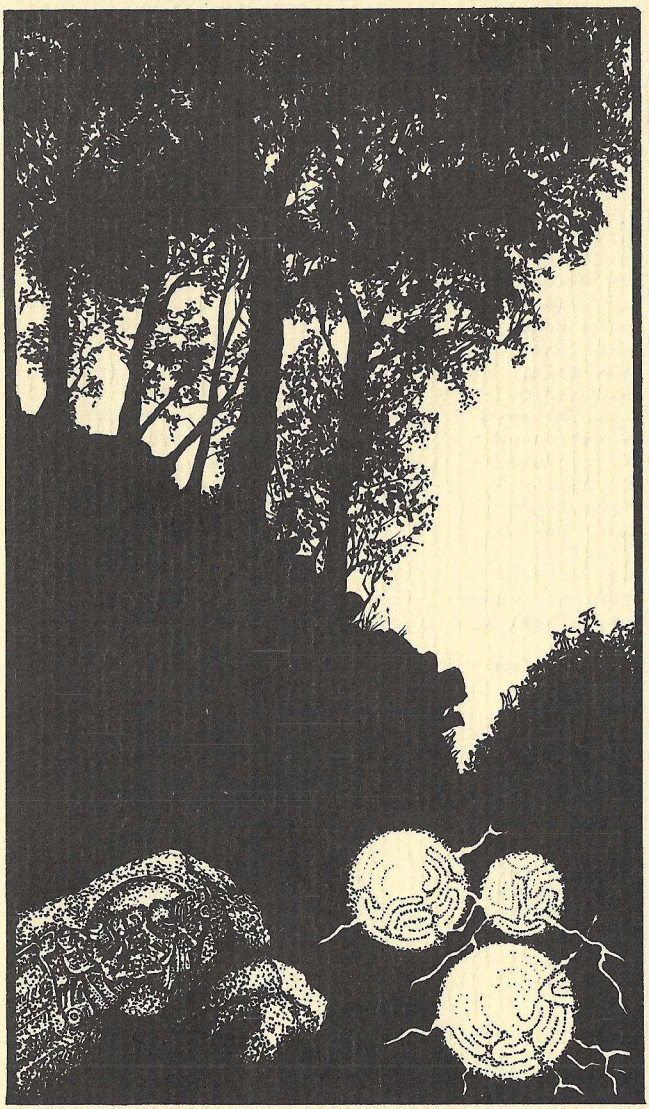
For a fanzine to qualify for the award at Novacon 20, one or more issues must have appeared between 1st October 1989 and 30th September 1990. For fanwriters and fanartists to qualify, a piece of writing or artwork by the person concerned must have been published in a fanzine for the first time between those dates. For the purposes of these awards, a 'fanzine' is defined as an amateur publication which is concerned with Science Fiction, Fantasy, Science Fiction and Fantasy Fans and/or related subjects, and copies of which may be generally obtained in exchange for other amateur publications or in response to letters of comment.

The fundamental idea of the Nova Awards is that they should be awarded by informed vote. Informed votes come from informed voters, and for the purposes of these awards these are defined as any member of Novacon 20 who has been active in fanzines in Britain between 1st October 1989 and 30th September 1990. 'Active in fanzines' is harder to define, but the current definition states that voters must have received SIX or more fanzines during the course of the relevant year. 'Fanzines' in this context means different publications, and not different issues of the same fanzine. The various official organs of a group or society will not be treated as different fanzines for the purpose of this rule.

Nova Award ballot forms will be enclosed with the third Novacon 20 progress report, and a supply will also be available at the convention itself. I hope that all of you who enjoy fanzines between now and then will bear the Nova's in mind and consider how to cast your votes. In the mean time, if you have any queries, comments or suggestions about the awards, please get in touch with me at the address below:

PAM WELLS, NOVA AWARDS ADMINISTRATOR
24A BEECH ROAD, BOWES PARK, LONDON, N12 2DA.

THE MEMBERS

001 Jack Cohen
002 Daniel Cohen
003 Bernie Evans
004 Alice Lawson
005 Steve Lawson
006 Richard Standage
007 Nick Mills
008 Al Johnston
009 Dave Mooring
010 Vicky Evans
011 Caroline Mullan
012 Tim Broadribb
013 Kate Wright
014 John Harold
015 Pat Brown
016 Vernon Brown
017 Stan Eling
018 Helen Eling
019 Ina Shorrock
020 Roger Robinson
021 Patrick Curzon
022 Richard James
023 Phil Rogers
024 Doreen Rogers
025 John F Dowd
026 Sarah Dibb
027 Dave Packwood
028 Arthur Cruttenden
029 Tim Illingworth
030 Mike Ford
031 William McCabe
032 Linda Parkin
033 Nigel Robson
034 Marcus L Rowland
035 Stephen Davies
036 Martin Tudor
037 Christopher F O'Shea 11
038 Susan Francis
039 John Dallman
040 Mike Westhead
041 Kathy Westhead
042 Niall M Gordon
043 Adrian Snowdon
044 Steve Jones
045 Susie Cheyne
046 Neale Mittenshaw-Hodge
047 Peter Mabey
048 Howard A Rosenblum
049 June Rosenblum
050 Colin Langeveld
051 Mike Stone
052 Gwen Funnell
053 Peter Wareham
054 Michael Abbott
055 Brian Davies
056 Lesley Ward
057 Dave Thomas
058 Lynn Edwards
059 Paul Brazier
060 Juliet Eyeions
061 Catherine McAulay
062 Chris Morgan
063 Pauline Morgan
064 Gareth Rees
065 Maureen Porter
066 Paul Kincaid
067 James Steel
068 Brian Ameringen
069 Martin Harlow
070 Neil Tomkinson
071 Alison Mitchell
072 Colin Harris
073 Colin Fine
074 Duncan Booth
075 Judy Booth
076 Paul Dormer
077 Roger Perkins
078 John Stewart
079 Pam Wells
080 Martin Easterbrook
081 Margaret Austin
082 Nic Farey
083 Louise Hill
084 Greg Pickersgill
085 Linda Pickersgill
086 Dave Ellis
087 Dave Hardy
088 Roger Culpan
089 Kevin Joyce
090 Ray Bradbury

[Last year's convention was <u>just</u> verging on the uncomfortable, with about 400 people actually present, so, whilst not imposing a formal limit at this stage, I shall be keeping a very watchful eye on the numbers. I have a very good idea by now of the percentage of non-attendees, and of walk-ins, that's one reason the on-the-door rate is so high. Watch this space.]